



QUAD 1986



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QUAD
a journal of art and literature



E X C E L L E N C E E N D U R E S

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A sincere thank you to Dr. Tatter for being patient and understanding with this editor; to the assistant editor, art editor, and staff for pulling together diverse personalities to form a cohesive group striving for the same goal—a quality journal; to the faculty for urging students to seek creative outlets; and most of all to the student body for whom *Quad* is created. It is my pleasure to present to you this work. I hope you enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Stiff".

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Merry Christmas

Searing heat melts
pink flamingos pulling
a plastic sleigh.

Santa wears shorts
as he rings a bell
to incite me to throw
coins in his kettle.

A fashion show
displaying the latest in beach wear
catches my eye as I pass.

The friendly glow
of an electric log
greets me when I enter the house.

A tin of candy
and a store-bought cake
complete the holiday scene.

I grab a towel
and go to the beach
to build snowmen of sand.

Day after tomorrow
we'll go to Morrison's
for our home-cooked meal.

Bob Shufflebarger

Grandma and the Moon

Beneath a pendent moon
Four people rode in a pickup
Truck. Grandma between
 Dad and Heather, anyone
 crouched by the window
Seeking breaths unstunk by White Shoulders and gauze
Reeking from Grandma coming to be cared for that weekend.
Because Nobody dared
Challenge Grandma's hearing aid,
 Beeping beeping
Beeping occasionally over whistling
Windows, there lingered
A loud
Quiet. And Orange moon
Spied far ahead low
Over horizon, hypnotizing with size and hue.
Moon's trance not broken
Until Grandma croaked, one day
 we're gonna send men up there.

Donald E. Yessick



Ted Fischer

Spirit Lake

Up here on the ragged edge on the given,
huddled in gortex shell, back to the wind
I sit, as random as the boulders around me,
in a steady rain, by Spirit Lake.

I am dead,
or gone, never-been, scattered over tundra
like violets and ice patches.

The sky pulls me upward with a grey gravity.
The wind could rush through my ribs, through my eyes.
Ashes I could be, lofted over the edge.

Then my rain shell whips and snaps like
trucks on gravel.

Hello, I say startled.
I shiver and feel myself shivering.
Time runs down my cheeks and drips off my chin.
I laugh aloud over the rippled lake.
My answer is the patter of water on water.

Hello.

Tony Daniel

Sea Oats and Bull Dozers

All neatly flowing
with the current of the
wind. Seeds breaking free,
reaching out to cling the
earth and sprout. Young oats yearning
for the height that rides in the
wind.

Used to be a sign
there. “Illegal to uproot
the sea oats.” Lotta good
some damn sign did. Bull
dozer killed all the sea oats.

Jason L. Comer

Low Tide

About a half mile from the pier
the rocky edges of a peninsula
protrude into the ocean.
The rippling waves lap against rough rocks;
the water moves in and out
of the crevice in rhythmic movements.
Soon it forms the illusion
of the peninsula moving into the ocean.
closer to the pier, the smaller waves
kiss the sand like soft, wet tongues.
I pick up a shell, chipped and worn
by its travels,
and hold it to my ear.
Did I hear your voice?

Susan L. William

Proud Papa

Haloed lights skim the windshield
as I maneuver on wet road.
Wipers thump hypnotically, clearing
my vision for an instant
and then an instant more.

Meg rides beside me,
nervous
and pregnant.
It is her third;
the first two were intentional.

You drank too much tonight, she whines,
and shouldn't be driving.
I grip the wheel tightly,
accelerating
to prove my sobriety.

Two kids are plenty
I remember telling her
as my rage builds again.
We can't afford this one
yet she insists on keeping it
because it's right, she says.

I turn to renew the argument.
Meg sees me run the light
sees the other car
tells me with her eyes
too late.

I sleep.
Then awaken to a white clad
face in a white
room.

Your wife is fine, I
am told, but she lost
the baby. I cry
knowing the car insurance will go up.

Bob Shufflebarger

Kansas

Katherine went chasing flies today,
flailing about
like a frantic spider in strong wind.
She said she was hungry
and laughed at us for staring
At lunch it rained, and we looked out
to see her shuffling through puddles
until her jeans clung wet to her knees.
She won't answer to "Katherine" sometimes.
Says her name's Kansas.
She dreams of riding
over a windy plain of waving grass
on a buckskin with a soft black mane
and bright eyes.
Folks shake their heads
and tell her she's crazy.
She just grins and says,
"Yup."

Ruth Vann

LUPUS

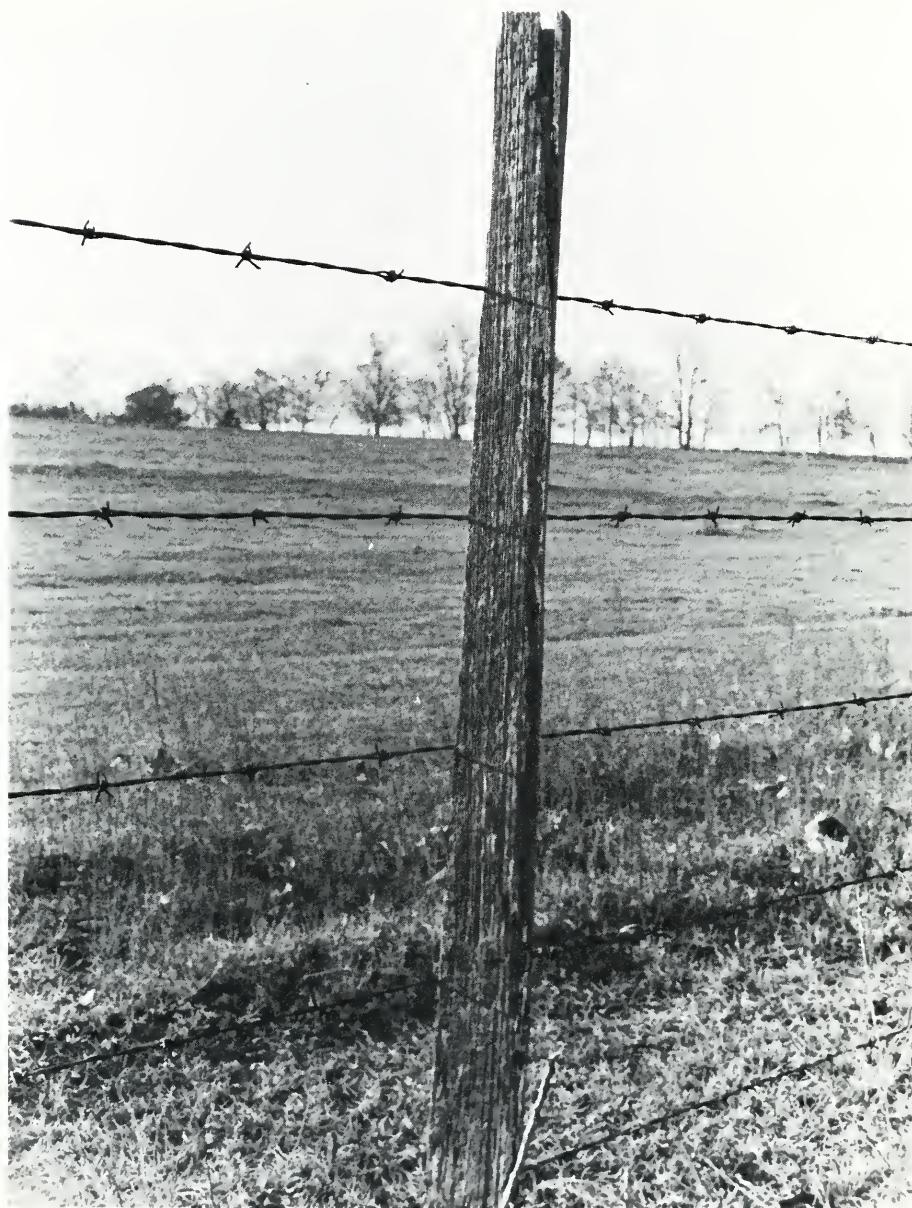
Glowing eyes pierce the night forest
Time when your voice reaches over the trees
Toward the moon you cry for the lost years,
A thousand years, when it was yours
Now taken from you in a thousand hours.

Storm clouds graze your bristled back
You can smell the rain coming; it is good
An old, safe friend from the sky
Pats you on the back, soothing you.

The wind and you are bothers
Howling through the darkness and wooded hills.
Rustling leaves, approval from the trees
Applauding your echoing duet.

Return to the depths of the rocks you call home
Bid goodnight to the moon and its tears
It sheds them for those lost years
And remains for the future of your children.
They too will look to the moon and cry.

Janie Shelswell-White



Ted Fischer

The Story

Late November. The winds danced and played and swirled across the fields and frozen ponds, chasing leaves with childish joy and then retreating to the safety of the heavy clouds. The sun, weak and indifferent, was falling gently from the sky, casting shadows long and shadows deep.

On a hill, worn by wind and rain, and covered with tall grasses brown from winter's early assault, stood a strong and majestic oak. Its broad limbs reached out to embrace the sky, and from its branches you could see the woods beyond the fields, and past the orange and brown expanse of trees, rose the diffuse grey of the Ozark Mountains.

Down the hill, and behind a small ridge, stood my grandfather's house. Inside, in the den, warmed by a fire and protected from the winds, you could see the top of the hill and the great oak. In the comforting shelter of the house, my grandfather had told me tales and stories of times long ago and places far away. I would sit in his lap and watch him as he talked, his eyes old and lined and bright and wise, his beard full and grey. He would lean back in his old rocking chair, the aromatic smoke from his hand-carved pipe filling the room, laughing until he cried about things he had done in the past.

I made him tell me one story over and over, until I knew it well enough to recite it by heart. It was his favorite story, one that he would tell anyone who would sit long enough for him to tell it.

He had been a boy, a thousand years ago in the time of his stories, a boy of twelve. It was his birthday, and his gift was a gun. A rifle, long and heavy, much too heavy for a boy to carry, much too long for a boy to balance. But it made a fine gift for a boy filled with the spirit of adventure. He had immediately taken to the woods in search of a suitable prey. For hours and days and weeks in

summer he searched and hunted. When he saw a squirrl or a racoon, he would find a tree and prop the butt of the gun against it to protect himself against the recoil. Then, using all his strength, he would point the rifle in the general direction of his target and pull the trigger. He never hit anything. The only thing he ever hurt with that rifle was his left foot: he dropped the rifle on it.

Then early one morning, as he walked along the ridge near the house (which was his grandfather's house at the time), he saw a deer on the hill. It was a young buck, with a very small rack, but it was a real hunter's prize. The buck was standing very still next to the great oak; its eyes were locked on my grandfather's (Grandfather's voice would get very soft when he got to this part in the story). Very slowly, with his heart pounding in his chest, and his breath coming in gulps, he raised the heavy rifle to his shoulder. His arms strained to hold the gun still against his trembling body. The buck lifted his head proudly, sniffing the air, watching the boy on the ridge.

Sweat was streaming in my Grandfather's eyes, and for a moment he said his heart and breath stopped. Closing his eyes, he pulled the trigger. The recoil of the rifle slammed him backwards, spinning him around, and knocking him off the ridge. He fell and tumbled and rolled and bounced all the way down the hill to the side of the house. He lay on the ground stunned, his right arm numb and still. He had dislocated his shoulder, an injury that plagued him his entire life. When his mother let him out of bed several days later, he went back up to the hill. There was no sign of the buck, but there was a huge, gaping wound in the old oak. Several times later in his life, grandfather swore he spotted that buck, standing on the hill, watching him.

Several years ago, Grandfather suffered a massive heart attack. He spent weeks in the hos-

pital, slipping in and out of a coma, the doctors predicting he had only days to live. I saw him once, on a Tuesday when the sky was dark, and rain fell in sheets. He was very thin, and very pale, but his eyes were the eyes of old, alive and sparkling, wise and sad. He smiled when I sat in the chair next to him. My father, standing over me, told me to tell Grandfather his favorite story. I did. I cried as I told him the story. I cried as I thought of his old rocking chair, and the smell of his pipe, and the grey of his beard, and the twinkle in his eye. I told him the story, and left silently. Grandfather had fallen asleep, with the thin line of a smile on his face.

Two days later, Grandfather died. I can still remember the impact of the shock and sadness I felt. It sank through my body like an anvil through water. His funeral was on Saturday, and after the ceremony, the family went back to his house behind the ridge. For me, so many people in that small house was painful.

I decided to take a walk through the woods. I walked for miles through the woods, up hills and down into ravines, kicking through the fallen red and orange and yellow leaves. I wanted to forget, but all I could do was remember. Grandfather. The house. The pipes and the eyes. The story.

The sky began to darken as the sun dropped behind the Ozarks. I turned toward the house, walking quickly in the gathering cold. As I turned up the road, my eyes travelled beyond the ridge to the top of the hill and the old oak. Standing next to that massive tree, holding its head up proudly, was a huge buck. I stood in awed silence, my heart beating very slowly and very deliberately. The buck paused only for a moment, and then it flicked its head and disappeared down the far side of the hill.

Michael W. Bay

Relativity

A stone
Smoothed by time
(Flowing water, air, God's breath)
Can express
A long enough
Passage of time
For anyone.

Ellen Mauldin

Almost Perfect

I love this room. The lighting
is diffuse, as though the photons can't decide
where to go. The walls
are eclectic; James Dean stares blankly
at a Matisse across the room. The television
is tiny: I could wear it on my wrist
were the cord long enough. The stereo
is always on, bathing the room
in sound. Vinyl discs
sit in a crate in the middle of the room,
begging attention—yesterday's albums
crouch somewhere near the back; Elvis' latest
rests proudly in front.

A fly sputters by, and I
pretend not to notice.

Bob Shufflebarger

*Wet into Wet**

I am your best friend—
I am your most vicious critic—
I am you.
I am the most devastating war—
I am the eternal peace—
I am you.

We walk together
under a bleeding watercolor sky.
We walk wet into wet.
We walk away from the beaten path
We walk as one—
Wet into wet.

I am your most delightful laugh—
I am the shadow in your nightmares—
I am you.
I am the most reverent prayer—
I am an existential curse—
I am you.

We walk together
under a laughing moon.
We walk wet into wet.
We walk away from the tidal wave
We walk as one
We walk wet into wet.

John T. Farmer

*Wet into wet is a painting term describing the application of wet paint onto wet paint.

Funeral of a Monk

Between two burning white candles
Christ crucified silently stands
on a place setting:
a white plate
a flat knife
a flat fork
a flat spoon
a white napkin.

“I don’t know if I want to be a monk,
let alone a priest.”

I will tell you when the time comes.
Moments before he died,
he was certain.

Wooden boxes are no longer built
by the monks in carpentry shop
not enough monks
not enough time
an inexpensive coffin purchased:
a plain gray casket
lined with simple white linen
no vault in the earth
no need preserve the remains
of this lowly servant.

A whole moon fills the sky
while dew clings with desperation
to the delicate strands of grass.
Abbey lights shatter
the icy balm of night
as the Office of the Dead
closes with the night:
from black to blue,
the stars have become clouds.

“With God, I can do anything,”
he once wrote in a letter.
“Without Him, nothing.”
Quietly, the mourning
walk the worn path
to the cemetery.
“*Ultima in mortis hora*
filium pro nobis hora,”
they chant.
“*Bonam mortem impetra*
Virgo Mater Domina.”
And another monk is buried.

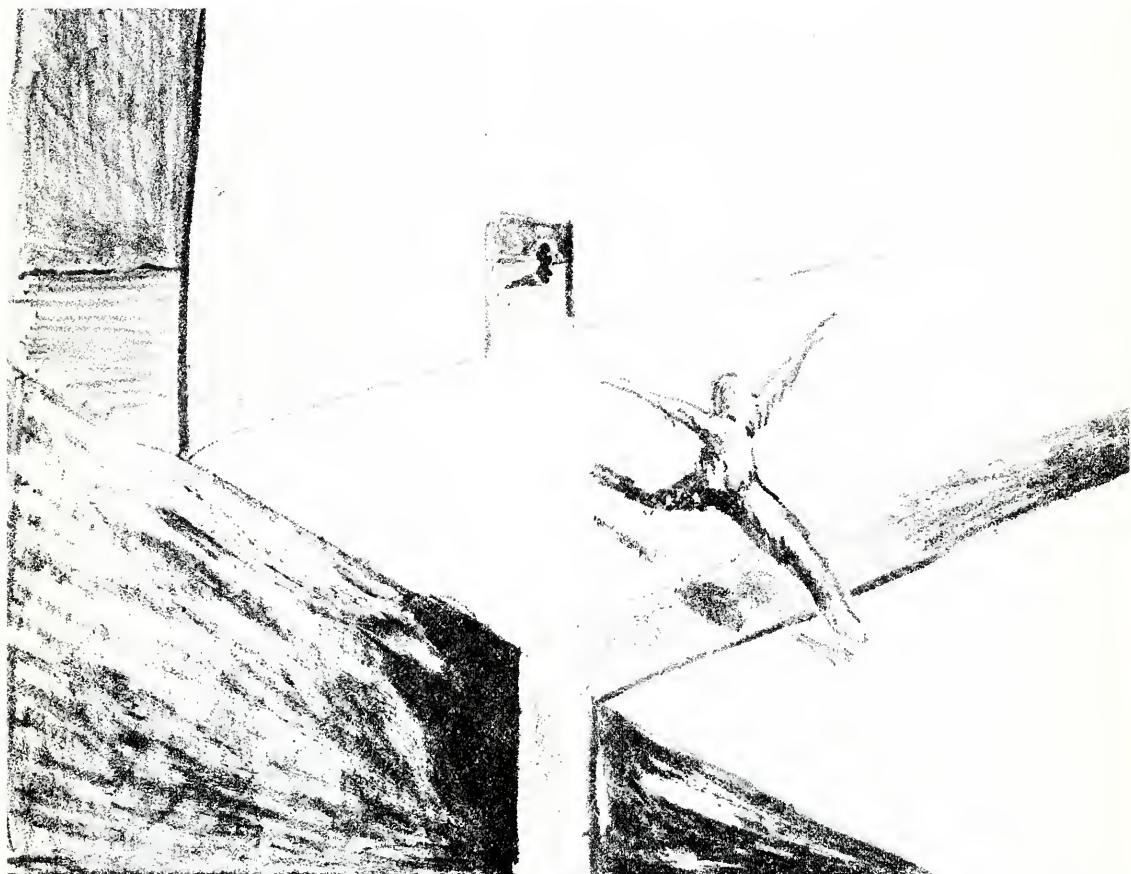
Michael Merino

Canonization

Resting his head
on a bottle for the night,
Frank slept
slumped in a doorway.
An occasional smile
curled on his bristly, blistered face
as the urine passed—
first soothingly warm
then cold
and warm once again
when his bowels finally gave.
By then comfort was meaningless
as was hardship
as was life.

Two beetles
raced up his left thigh,
one pausing
to partake of a crusty scab.
During the stoic slumber,
a rat
nailed his teeth
through clasped hands.
Headlights from a passing car
briefly illuminated
a pool of bloody mucus
around Frank's pocked face
while the engine's roar
sang the benediction.

Michael Merino



Darwin Gentry

my heart treads in a vast sea
of bittersweet feelings

aimlessly, it struggles,
uncertain, wavering
in its purpose and intent

blinded in direction
my lifeforce waits,
praying for an island to reappear
upon the horizon

you were my island
just as others before you

thoughts within
suggest subtle hints of illusion,
mirage, as others have been

yet, my spirit knows you to be real,
reachable, reality
you seem so close

I swim earnestly,
expelling my limited energy

fog banks whisper in,
clouding my perception
surrounding me in a blanket
of disarray

I stop

again, I begin to tread. . .
the distance between us
stretches outward

I pray for a second chance,
another view of you;
direction

senses become numb in their weariness,
my heart cries out in its anguish
and then is silenced

I move, swimming slowly toward
the memory of you,
my soul needs no guidance,
just purity of intent

I may never make it through the fog bank
it does not matter,
I go anyway. . .

James Decatur

Jephtha
(see *Judges 11*)

My dear brothers were too pure for this world:
blood strained so much through kin it was water.
When Ammonites came to slice open and drink them,
the elders thought better of bastard blood.

*She comes dancing from the doorway,
like ashes in an updraft
from a blazing pyre.*

Yes, war is glorious in a certain way.
There is a love of life left when sword edge
grazes the gut—a gift from Ammonite
that I return to heart from which it came.

*She is laughing like a ripple
of water in a well bottom
when a stone is dropped.*

And oaths, oaths are a way for lonely man
to bind himself to something, someone, eternal,
to feel the God-rush of forever in his brain,
to be something more than dirt sifting through dirt.

*She sees anguish slump my shoulders,
wonders what makes men sad,
then smiles and runs to me.*

Tony Daniel

Jephtha's Daughter

Two months through hollows, summits, secret springs
I would have never known without the pressure
of time to carry me. Through green pastures,
down shadowy valleys, then to still waters
I flowed. My soul is a spring, pregnant
to erupt as rock held over pooled
water to drop. So now I will descend
into the plains of Gilead, my home.

Father will waver. I must hold firm:
for if I do not burn, Israel will—
the Lord's hand, pricked by sting of broken oath,
will open, and the tribes will tumble out
and back into the arms of enemies.

So, I descend to die. How very strange—
I am untouched, yet something in my womb
is stirring. It is perhaps my offering
to God. Something only born of fire.

Tony Daniel

For the Killed Astronauts

I think you are the moons of Neptune then:
you shine silver and fall around a world.
Better: you are Uranus' rings, spread thin
through emptiness: perhaps old moons unfurled.
Knowing has flashed, burned and, with a sharp report,
spent itself in winter air. Nothing
remains but shards and ashes and bright, short
recollections; I cannot see the thing
in itself, only something—I know not what—
something silent and spinning, twirling, tied
like moons to moon paths—abstracted curves which plot
the outer edges of what you knew: to hide
from chances would be clinging to a wall;
we're born onto this ground to learn to fall.

Tony Daniel



The Transplant

Instruments, neatly scattered,
lie next to the patient,
her body propped open
as her black, greasy blood
drips on the floor.

Wrapped with sterile paper,
packed in a crack,
her new engine awaits
the surgeon's capable hands.

His internship of books,
and diagrams, and charts
has been completed
just the hour before.

On this, his first operation,
the mechanic is full of doubt.
Will she live to roll
another "Hundred Thou"?

Bert Oliver

Chopstick Medley in 4 Parts

Cherry blossoms
delude the viewer,
making spring seem snowy.

I stretch beside the water,
pretending to be a swan,
lacking only their pureness.

Making white paper boats,
I sail them among
the fallen blossoms.

Only I can tell the blossoms
from boats—
the swans peck at both.

Chris MacDonald

Slow Hour

At 5 p.m
I form new, one-hour friendships
To my left and to my right,
As we share a segment
of the metallic centipede
That crawls along the Interstate,
over the mountain,
and is slowly dissected by 6 p.m.
Only to regenerate again tomorrow.

Tom Doggett

Wintergray

Still asleep,
not even beginning
to think about pushing up
heaving and raising the ground's level
a birth-sprout humming with fresh green.

For now, sky, clouds, grass, day,
all gray, indifferent, sterile,
hinting of nothing but more grayness
with cold which chisels into the bone
and now-and-again wind which splays dead reeds.

Longing for color, I check the bulb beds once more
only to feel a conspiracy of cold and wind
and natural dirt which slumps in spots
as though it's pushing down hard on struggling life.
Defiant, I dig down to find
Old Lazarus,
smiling with baby eyes.

Ellen Mauldin



Whenever news of a storm came across the T.V. screen, moving in the flow of teletype, my father, or if was afternoon, my mother would "shush" the household in silence. With furrowed brow they would read the list of counties endangered by the weather.

"Where is that?" Mother would inquire.

"Well, it's just to the west of us now and travelling north. We'd better keep an eye on it," Daddy would reply.

They both seemed to take "keep an eye on it literally." Every now and then Mother would look up from her sink and, still swirling the dishcloth inside a bowl, gaze out the window at a darkening patchwork sky fringed by pine tree branches. Being, as Daddy would say, "a tall urchin for the fourth grade," I could enjoy the same view Mother had without having to sit up on the cold counter and get rinsed with the dishes. So I stood beside her in the small dim kitchen on the rinse-and-drain side of the sink, close enough to qualify for being in the way had the weather been clear. But, for a while, we would stand small and humble, and she would hurry to finish the dishes before the storm.

Daddy walked through the kitchen on his way outside. He didn't "watch" the weather as Mother did. He claimed instead to "feel" it. I studied him through the backdoor screen as he stood in the yard, one arm folded, one hand holding onto the smoking pipe in his mouth. From this vantage point he could survey a great expanse of sky and his own plot of ground, paying especial attention to his garden. His beans clung to flimsy poles and his corn would bend or break as the wind would have it. I walked out, careful to keep the wooden screen door from slamming. I stood beside him quietly, arms folded, and we "felt" the weather.

The winds which the darkness seeped in on were not the friendly, bustling winds of everyday, but clammy ones like damp cement. I stood with Daddy and waited for the first dollop of rain that pelts the skin and makes you turn to see what hit you, but the drops still clung to their clouds. Their

clouds just ambled along. Daddy broke from his trance and went off to the garden to secure some plants and perform such duties as one was advised to do "before it rains."

When the final warning to take shelter came over the radio, we reacted like firemen. Indeed, my long, red, snap-front raincoat looked like a cartoon fireman's. Mother calmly gathered up her purse, flashlight, and radio. Daddy checked the windows and doors. Together, with our Pug dog, Wu Wu, we herded to our next station. There we found a row of black rubber boots set out in descending order. Daddy went ahead outside to open the basement door which always stuck. Mother and I clung together under an umbrella as we dashed through the rain, trying not to trip over Wu Wu splashing underfoot.

The steps leading down to the basement were enclosed in a small greenhouse of opaque corrugated plastic. This served as a nursery for Daddy's beloved tomato plants. Water seeped under the greenhouse door, trickled down the steps like a fountain, and stood at the warped basement door. A family of frogs lived around this pool, so I sloshed carefully. We all sloshed through.

The basement floor was a combination of cracked, mouldering dirt and greenish-brown muck that slanted from the door to meet a level concrete slab. There we had our posts. My parents took theirs in identical white lawn chairs, I in my yellow lounge chair. Mother placed the flashlight at her feet, the radio beside the lantern on a brick wall that held back the earth on three sides. I lay back in my chair. Above my head, Elton John sang "Bennie and the Jets." I stared up at the underside of our house, complex with its network of wires and pipes like nerves and viens running through a body.

"Did you unplug the T.V. and air conditioner?" Mother turned to Daddy. Wu Wu bounced at Mother's feet.

"I don't know if I did or not. I'll go check." He clumped toward the door.

"Don't go out if it looks too bad," She said and turned to Wu Wu. "You don't need to get in my lap with your dirty old feet. No."

"I think we have a few minutes to check things," Daddy said. We always had more than a few minutes when we sat in the basement.

I closed my eyes. Elton John was competing with static. I heard the boards creak as Daddy moved in the house. I had heard the family from beneath times before when I would pretend to be an alien spying on them. The boards creaked a lot in the full-swing of the day. Wu Wu's toenails clicked as she jumped.

"Oh you just had to bring your muddy feet up here!" Mother complained, but Wu Wu always got her way.

The sticking door burst open. A bright flash of lightning lit up the clouds. Daddy clumped back down. I watched his feet, he didn't. Even if the frogs liked the storm they had two big rubber reasons to fear for their lives.

Wu Wu did not like the storm. She held back her ears and jumped at the rumbling of thunder which followed the last flash. During calmer times, she would have ambled about the dirt, sniffing at the rows of onions Daddy laid out on the boards to dry. Sometimes I would bend down and follow her, ducking low pipes. She liked to stop at a pile of feathers under a low window which my cat, now gone, had stilled.

There were frogs for Wu Wu to chase, and me to stop her. The frogs belonged there. Furry-four-leggers, and even slick-skinned-two-footers did not. The frogs survived, if only in form. Some frog bodies hardened with the ground, turning whitish and prehistoric and ready to crumble like a butterfly. Others glistened fat in the muck. When rains came, this was their place.

Lightning flashed and lit the small ground level window near the door. The sky was black with clouds, black with night. I could only see the rain as falling bits of light, shards of glass, when the lightning came. If the house fell down right then, I thought, we would not be fossilized beside

the frogs, we would be splintered between a man-made concrete slab and building fragments..

Should the weather turn very severe, my parents had a safety plan. There should have been no need to be concerned about splintering. This plan dictated that we sandwich ourselves between cot mattresses on the floor in descending order. Daddy would suffer flying objects and debris, but I would literally be suffocated by home and family. I am glad we were never forced to implement this procedure. Short of that, hard hats were to be worn and curled safety positions to be assumed. The weather report droned on through the static. My parents were alert. I watched the water seep across the floor through grooves in the cement.

What if we were killed? That question always returned in the stillness. I could see our bodies in a pile. This vision led me to think of the victims in Pompeii, paralyzed in the midst of flight. Even today they were distinguishable. If our bones were not properly separated, would I be buried with some of my mother's ribs? The dead don't usually speak for themselves the way the victims at Pompeii do. If we lost our identities, no one would know. It would be no disgrace to those who buried us. It would not be as if frogs had feathers.

Another Elton John song came over the radio, but much clearer. They must be playing a lot of him, I thought, but then it had bee a while since "Bennie and the Jets." Another song, another weather report, the sky very dark, and without lightning, I could not see the rain.

"Do you think it has passed us yet?" Mother asked and got my attention.

"Yeah, I think we can go up now," Daddy replied.

My body was not my own as I rose from the chair. Wu Wu scurried to the door. The air outside struck me as fresh and thick. The night, ground, and sky, held together in a gel.

First out of our protective hold, then out of our protective clothes, we headed toward electric lights, bathroom, and the refrigerator. The world hung wet as I slept.

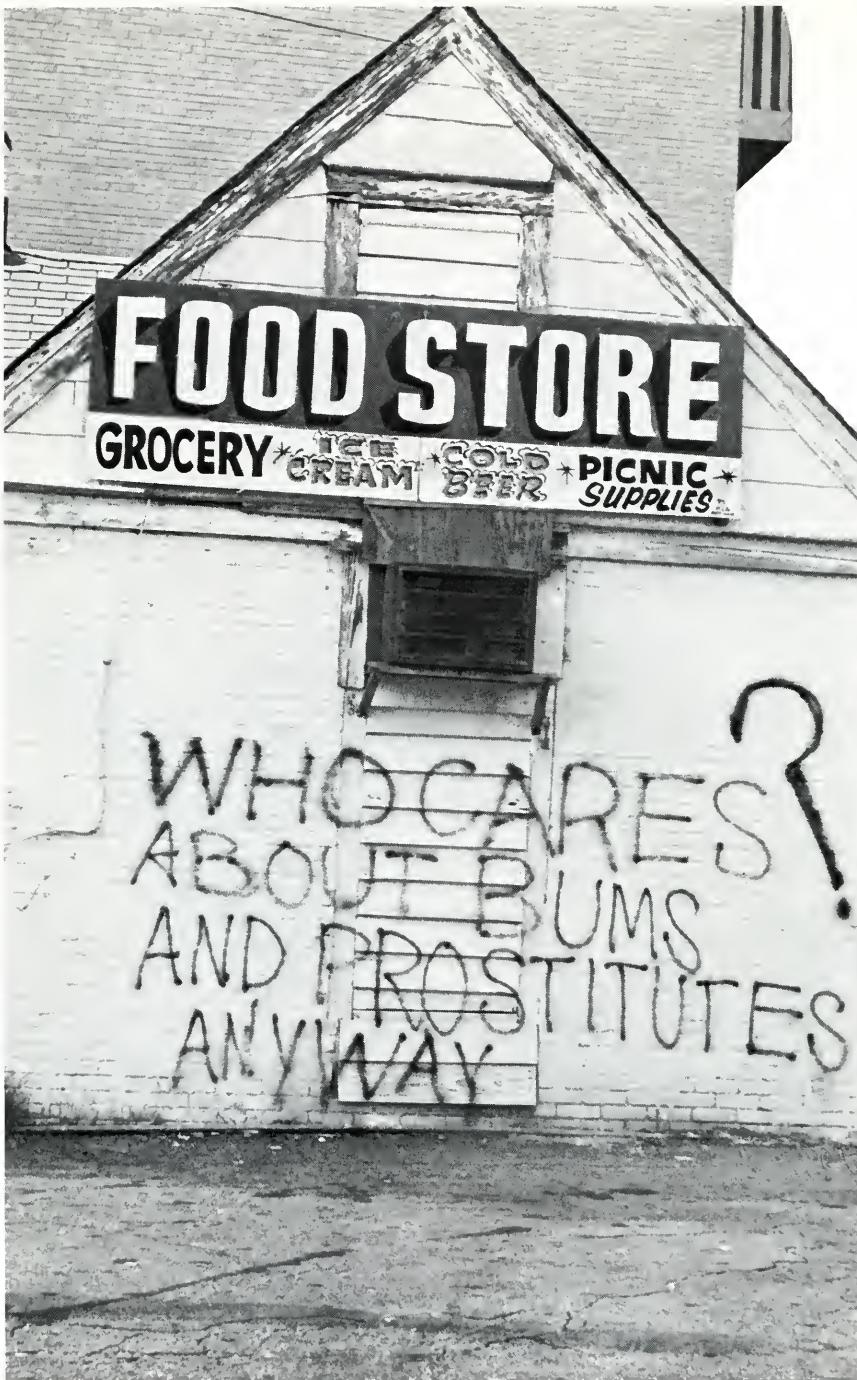


Rob Caslin

Rally in D.C.

Some 36,000
invaded today
Armed with their placards
and their slogans.
Carrying fetuses and
grim reaper effigies.
Youth crusader children
pushed and showed.
Teens ran screaming thru the
Smithsonian-leaving their own
trail of destruction.
And a small boy
aimed
and swung
his placard at a black clown.
(a poor black clown entertaining by the street)
The men toted the American flag
with their own grisly extras stapled
to the bottom.
When the buses had gone, taking protesters home,
there was only litter.
Litter blowing through the crosswalks
pamphlets strewn on bathroom floors
and placards piled upon museum steps.
Their final word.

Lisa Marie Klien



MODERN TOYS

WHAT ARE MODERN TOYS
ARE THEY THE GUNS

ROCKETS
AND BOMBS

THAT AMUSE 'OUR BOYS'
ARE THEY THE COMMIES
THAT WE MUST BEAT
TO SAVE OUR LIVES

OUR CHILDREN
OUR PEOPLE
OUR WORLD

CAN WE SEE
IT'S THEIR WORLD TOO
AND OUR HOPES

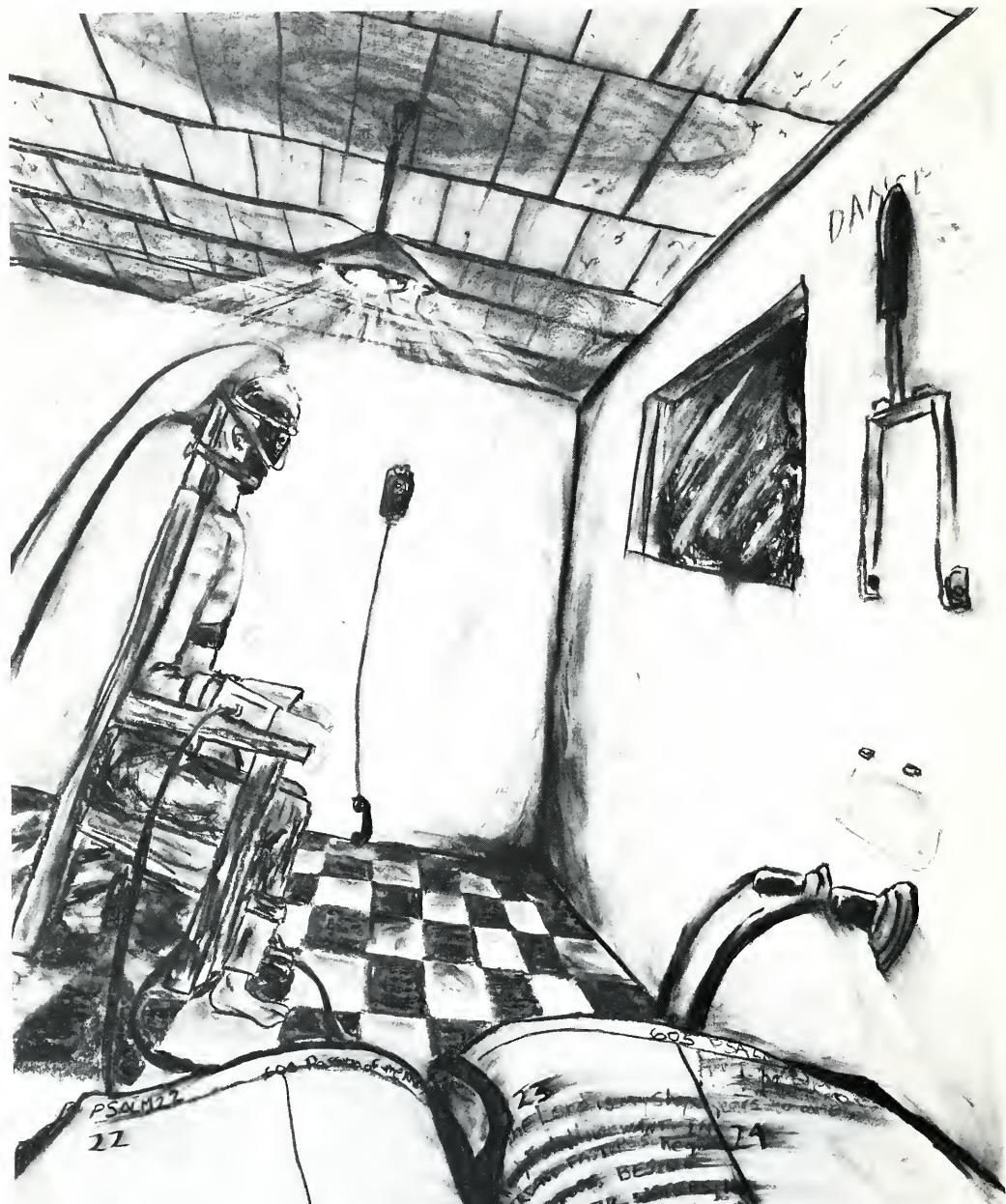
SHALL PERMEATE
FOR THEY HOLD THEM
IN THEIR HEARTS
AND MINDS
AND BODIES

THEY WANT WAR
NO MORE THAN US
WHY CAN'T EITHER
OF US
ADMIT
THAT WHEN PLAYING

WITH SUCH TOYS
THERE IS A WINNER

TOO BAD
HE WON'T BE AROUND
TO ENJOY IT.

Wade Dinsmore



John T. Farmer

Vietnam Memorial

The crowd marches by
staring at name
after name.

And their reflections
dance in the polished granite
like the ghosts of the
faceless before them.

Slaughtered by the guns, diseases, napalm.

And the others still burning with the fire.

Killed by the betrayal.

The people, government, family.

The valiant heroes. Soon traitors.

Spirit slain by the media blast.

And still three men of bronze
stand strong amidst the betrayal
Poised and ever ready to serve.

Lisa Marie Klien

Taxi Driver

He drives the city streets at night
because he cannot sleep.
A veteran, but of what? A war
that escapes remembrance.
But Travis remembers. New York
reminds him, because it,
too, is a battleground where death
lurks in shadows, waiting.

Travis can wait no more.
A new war beckons--this one his
alone. He tempers his
body and mind, preparing to
cleanse the streets of vermin,
then explodes in an orgy of
bloody violence--yet he
emerges unscathed, a hero.

Bob Shufflebarger

A Tear of Revenge

As I'm speeding along the deserted road panICKed and delirous, I listen to the beat of the rain dropping steadily on my car; I hear its rhythm chanting a strange song to me:

"run little fawn, and don't look back
you know that hunter's now on your track
he knows you saw your mother die
so it's of no use now for you to cry
for he doesn't want you to live to tell
who killed your mother and the others as well
just run swiftly little fawn and get away —
save your crying for a safer day ..."

How did my imagination conjur up such a song from just the sound of windshield wipers and falling rain, I wonder? It makes me shudder. The rain begins to turn into a light sprinkle. I turn off the windshield wipers and press my foot heavily on the gas — my little car responds immediately. I feel as though I'm in a numbed shock. I glance at my windshiled, instead of through it, for a moment, and notice that the light rain is now causing "water pictures" (as my sister and I called them on our family trips) to form on the glass. I look closer, and see a dead fawn lying on its side etched in the raindrops — clear blood flows from its small shoulder and it looks at me so helplessly; its eyes still open, staring innocently and questioningly, as if I have an answer. A teardrop falls from its clear face and at the same time, one drops from my cheek to the dashboard.

The fawn's single rain-tear falls downward, picking up smaller pellets of water in its path and getting larger and more powerful — like a growing snowball picking up speed as it rolls down a hill. It is a teardrop looking for revenge.

My trembling hands clutch the steering wheel and beads of sweat form on my brow — the rain, sweat, clear blood, and tears, mix, making the watery visions of the fawn overwhelmingly blurry, and

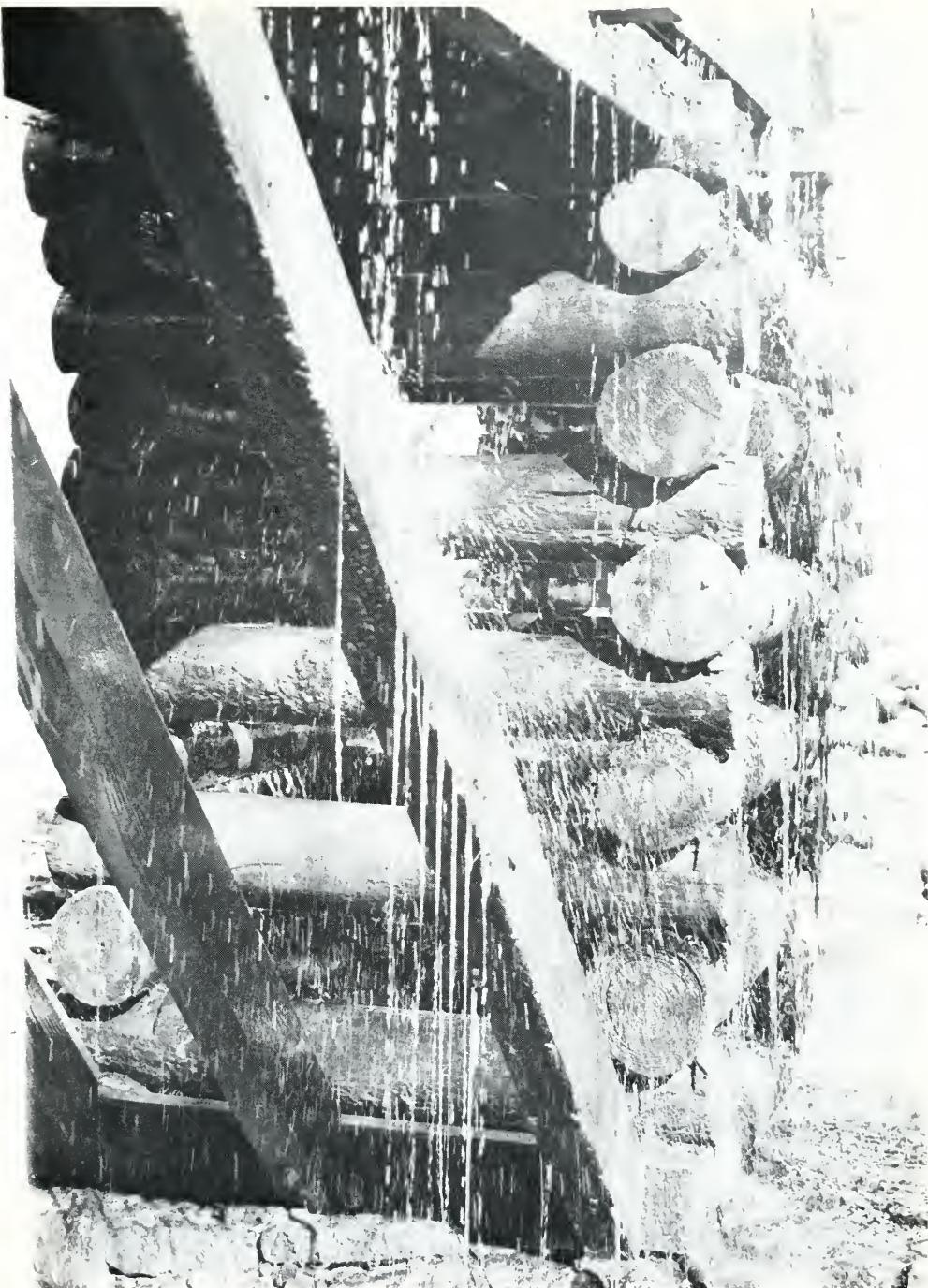
giving me a sense of a great river of liquid sorrow, in which my fawn and I are slowing drowning.

Frightened, I press even more heavily on the accellerator. The rain starts up again and I have to turn on my windshield wipers, erasing my beloved fawn picture. The fog becomes thicker and I grow lonelier and more desperate. I glance in the rear view mirror and see two tiny lights steadily growing larger. My heart pounds and I put my foot to the floor. I keep glancing in the mirror, watching the lights behind me instead of watching the road ahead. My wipers are whispering furiously now, putting me almost into a trance: "Run little fawn, and don't look back, don't look back, don't look back..." I want to switch them off but the rain is pounding on the hood of my car now. My speeding car dangerously slips from one side of the lane to the other, in the water, and I keep looking in the mirror, hypnotized by the headlights, which are getting closer and closer.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I catch a glimpse, through the fog, of something moving about thirty feet ahead of me, and I quickly see that it's a fawn standing dead-still, staring at my approaching car. I slam on the brakes and swerve to miss it, just as it leaps to safety — right in the path of my swerving car. I hit it just as I feel the hydroplaning car leave the road. The car flips off the shoulder and over a cliff.

I'm bleeding everywhere but feel no pain, as though I'm numb. The dead fawn is sprawled out on the hood of the car, its blood spattered on the cracked windshield. I sense someone watching us both die from the shoulder of the road above. I look sadly at the fawn once more and realize that neither of us got our revenge.

Susan L. Williams





John DeWitt

Graves

The dusty red clay rises in puffs where I walk.
Past the old pine tree, with arms spread wide,
The stones are a weathered black gray.

Names, too faint to make clear,
bring ghosts like some ancestral memory.
Summerlines, Holts, and Brunsons, my mother's maiden name.

Back three rows, under trees dripping
with Spanish moss, lies a grave too small
to be any but a child's.

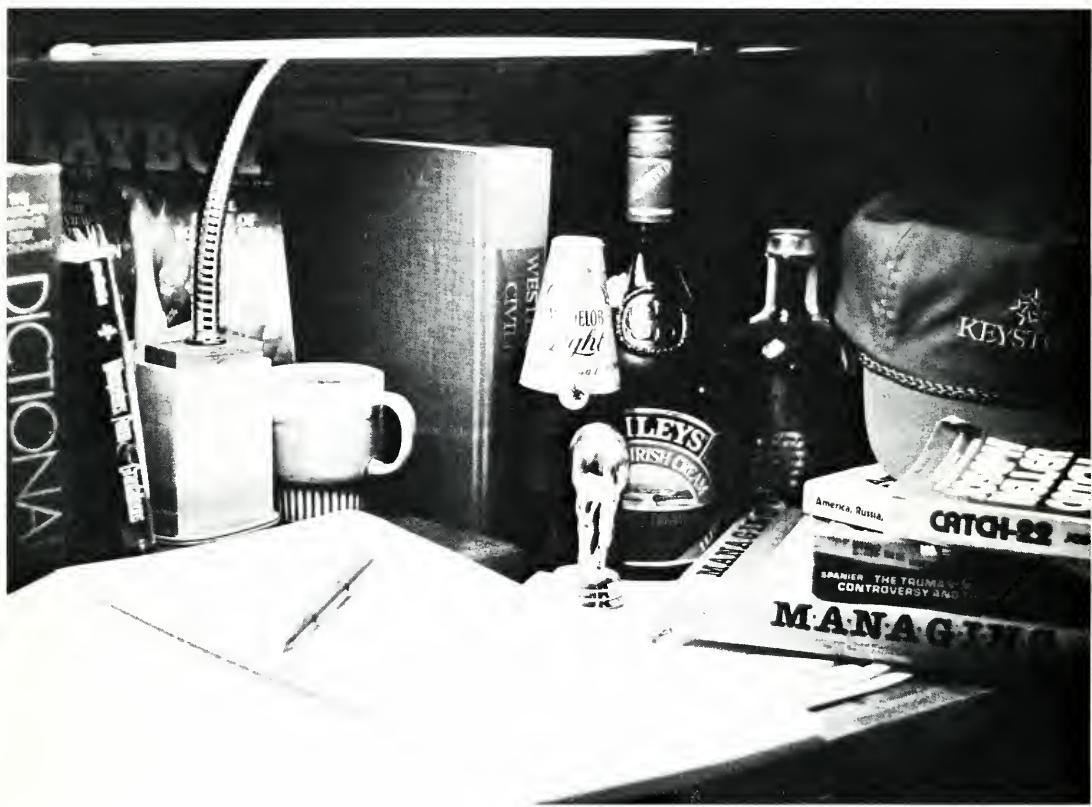
No name etched in stone, no other grave around,
white marble shines. It has yet to change color.

Bert Oliver

Cemetery Dogs

Drive through the large iron gates
Past the row of grey marble houses,
And there they are.
Catch them sitting
Between large aged stones, benches,
Figures that represent loved ones.
These cold stones are the last act of love
That the living can do.
Watch them sitting, guarding, waiting
Until security runs them out at sundown.

Joanie Stiff



Bob Bay

“It’s one of those nights,” she announced as she walked into the room. “I have a test tomorrow at eight, and I just keep falling asleep.” She sat down on the end of my bed. “What are you doing?”

“Pretending to study real estate,” I answered.

“Where’s your roommate?” She asked, picking up my real estate book and looking through it.

“She went drinking.” I yawned and stretched my arms above my head. “I’m bored! Let’s go get a beer.”

“No!” She protested. “I have a damn psychology test tomorrow!”

“So bring your notebook! I’ll quiz you.”

“I’m so sure!”

“Oh, come on...you never have any fun.”

“You are a bad influence on me!”

“You know you won’t study any more! Look how late it is. One drink won’t hurt.”

She narrowed her eyes and studied me. “Can we go get doughnuts instead?”

“Yeah!”

“Okay.”

Any port in a storm, any excuse not to study.

Ellen Beal

Unlisted

eggs

bread

Sominex

~~pepper~~

He was the only one who used it.

potatoes

aspirin

~~root beer~~

I hate root beer

~~egg rolls~~

He took me to a Chinese place on our first date.

steak ~~(2)~~

One is enough

~~charcoal~~

He always cleaned the grill.

tissue

~~potato chips~~

~~strawberries~~

~~ice cream~~

~~Hershey bars~~

I've lost my

appetite.

Ellen Mauldin

Empty Words Do Not Fill an Empty Life

I do not know what to say to you

I do not hear what you say.

My mind is filled with empty thoughts
that float silently away.

Your call brings me back
to the world of fear and pain.

I raise suspicious eyes to yours
but I know there is nothing there.

Your eyes like broken mirrors
reflect nothing that is real.

Your voice is laden
with hollow lies
that I no longer hear.

Michael W. Bay



John DeWitt



John DeWitt

Branching Out

I am the oak tree, firmly planted,
Watching the years pass before me.

A horse and buggy kick dust into my bark,
People with dreams that slowly turn into reality
Rest under my shady refuge, looking to the future.
They speak of wealth and opportunity.

An empty field. A log cabin. A dirt road.
The one house turns to many and the many turn into a town.
Roofs reach higher, wood becomes steel.
Buggies now faster, the horse standing aside.

No dust anymore, only thick hot tar,
Black as the soil into which I reach.
No longer do I look over playing children,
But over busy, hurried strangers who never look at me.

And though I may have thousands of leaves,
I know when just one has fallen.

Janie Shelswell-White

You knew what you were going to do. You know at the bat crack, the hollow, crooked crack from your dreams. Fly to shallow center. One out. Man on first. Fly to shallow center. You did not see your father, but your body was moving with conditioned response, muscles trained in a game you had played late into the previous night, in your bed. So you did see him, really; you knew exactly how he looked, what he was doing: the hand turning the wedding band, the knees held tightly together, elbow on thigh, chin on fist. He is making himself small, you thought, like someone were trying to hit him. Later, you realized it was you he was afraid of; it was a fear like a gambler's rolling dice; you were dice. But you came to know, that afternoon, that you were not dice. There was no uncertainty, no gamble on that play. Why?

The boy on first was tagging up, staying put. The batter broke into a half-hearted trot down the base line, not wanting to pass the dugout entrance, knowing he would then have to come back, lengthening his stay on the field, and his humiliation. Perfect, you thought, I'm going to surprise them—all.

Even at twelve, you knew that you were not unusual, that you were in the majority. You had a father that pressured you to do well at baseball. Other players on your team were the same. Later, you would find that the greater part of your childhood was the greater part of everyone else's. At the magazine you would write for, your colleagues would pity you for being so ordinary. You seldom mentioned it, but when you sometimes said, "My father wanted me to be a pro-ballplayer," they would take drags from their Turkish cigarettes, or take a mouthful of coffee, slowly swallow it, then reply in sardonic tones, "Of course." Sometimes you were embarrassed, acutely embarrassed. Mostly you would keep silent and be thankful. You would remember playing center field, and that short fly.

Yes, you did well at school, and your father

was not indifferent. Surveying the A's at the end of each term, your father would draw on his pipe, then exhale, filling the room with the aroma of drug store tobacco. Then he would withdraw the pipe, stick out his lower lip, hump forward and reach for his billfold. Five dollars an A, by high school. Your mother had taught you to read, at five.

Later, your father would read the stories you wrote for the school paper; later still, when you became sports editor for your college paper, he actually wrote you a letter, congratulating you. Your father had known before anyone else what your long article on baseball for the literary slick meant for you, to you. "You've made the big times, kid," he said when they hired you as sports editor, three stories later. When your father read your byline, he was proud, of course, and genuinely happy. Not content, though—you saw it, the twinge of regret, the unsolid connection that slices a ball up, spoils a home run, signals a fly—higher than the lights, but out. What you did not know, even as a young man, not until your father was dying, slipping in and out of the present, was that after the regret, your father would remember that night, that shallow fly, and chuckle. He told you in one of the last moments of candor, when it had to be true.

Where did you get the idea? At first you thought of it as a mental feat, like a child re-inventing calculus, only on a smaller scale. Later you came to think of it as a gratuity from the universe. Finally, after the books were selling, and you had time to think, you ceased to think of it as anything. It occurred, it was done, had been done, was done, many times. Of course, you had never seen it when you thought of it. Later, when you saw players in the majors do it, you would joke with yourself. "I invented that," you would joke.

The idea came from thinking about baseball, late at night. Perhaps, at twelve, you should have been thinking about other things. Even then, the attraction you would feel for the game of your life

was awake. It was sensual: you could hear the coach yelling, taste your gum, smell the grass, feel the chill of twilight. You played baseball in your mind, and you kept up with the innings. You thought about the games. What your father said seemed to be true: "Baseball is a perfect game." Later you would describe the feeling as coming face-to-face with a form, a universal. Baseball, like myth, you said, permeates things. Later still, when you were not so afraid of being laughed at, you would call baseball a metaphor of life, a play of chaos and order. All you knew at twelve was that the game was beautiful, and you longed for it. But baseball was not perfect; your father was wrong. You proved it, the night before the shallow fly.

The ball was hit wrong, but hard. You followed it as it curved up into the lights. You anticipated where it would come out, positioned yourself on the edge of the arc the ball would cut through the summer air. The second baseman was backpedalling. "Mine," you said firmly. Timing was critical. You had rehearsed it all the night before.

Sometimes rehearsing did not help. "Keep in front of the ball," your father said, many times. Night after night, you did; you dreamed of staying in front of the ball. Then came the nightmares that were reality. The ball was hurling at you; it was hard; it could knock your head off: the anguished side-step, touching the ball, but losing it, the error. Your father knew how many errors you had made. He kept the statistics.

Baseball was not perfect. The night before you found a flaw in the beauty, something that just did not seem to fit in. It was like finding rats in the communion wafers at your church, like finding a flaw in the foundation of a pyramid. For a while, you were numb. But at the same time, it was funny, something your father would appreciate. You fell asleep thinking about how to exploit it.

Later you would look back and shake your

head. "It was like cheap Oriental philosophy, that night. The Zen of baseball." You stood under the ball, and were the ball, falling down, back-spinning, white as innocence.

From the stands, your mother yelled, in her assured voice, "Get it, Rob."

You felt reality leaking in all about you, leaking into the perfect symmetry of the playing field; things were about to go awry, change, in a timeless world. Rules would bend.

Just as the ball reached you, you withdrew your glove, touching the ball enough to dampen the spin. The baseball hit the ground with a sound of leather on real grass.

"No!" yelled your father. "Rob."

The crowd of parents in the stands were all silent at once, pitying your father, thinking you beyond hope. You did not have time to look at your father—you were bending to retrieve the ball—but you felt it when the idea struck him, with the same clarity, the same essence, that it had blasted into your mind the night before. For a long instant, your father and you were privileged to inside information about the universe.

The short stop was covering second.

"Hey," you called to the startled boy, "Here it comes."

The runner at first had never left the bag. The short stop had not caught on.

"Throw it to first," you called. "It's a double play."

The batter had caught on, and was streaking to first. The ball beat him. Distantly, like the falling of far-away marble columns, you heard the umpire calling two outs. The boy on first still did not understand; he left the field dumbly, uncomprehending.

You and your father looked at one another. He pointed to his forehead. You grinned. You felt a jolt like a bat crack inside you. A connection, you thought, a solid connection. Then the right fielder slapped your back as he ran by, and you turned and trotted toward the dugout.

Tony Daniel

Ochre cows skiing
Caterpillar death a cocoon consummation
Cheerios destroy the morning with their never-ending space.
Gopher on a trisket speeds through D-rings-
Please sign this petition for the illumination
of all stereo equipment. Thank you!

Over forty were there twisted
Eyelashes laced with starving maggots
instant squirrels: add milk.

Fingers ran down the wall while a woman sang once upon a time
The ocean is full of dead surrealists
with an ear on the carpenter's bench
tapping pink abysses at revielle!

Crystallized solidified air
joined by beads of water
and clams continue to tell the card deck to clean
up the impossible

Airless blue
finding nonsense
pink worlds vanish.

Skies flying through trees.
oranges dancing on fences.

Elephants ate spaghetti and lay on the beach while
nevertheless, the lone rhino found his God.

The sky is the open door to the infinite.

**Mary Banks, Tracy Barnes, Madeline Burr, Ann Eason
Rosemary Evans, Saundra Hamm, Julie Hill,
Patrick Herren, J.R. Hughes, Tammy Klepper,
Linda Peacock, Carolyn Robertson, Angela Shearer,
Jennifer Tarpley, J.T. Farmer, Jane Archer,
LaDonna Smith, and Davey Williams**

The above was composed automatically and collectively by the Archer/Sloane interim class studying Surrealism. Automatic writing is a technique first used by the surrealists to by-pass rational restraints on the writing process. In this class, a pad of paper was passed around and everyone wrote one line without looking at what had been written before. It is essential that one not look at what had been written before. The only influence should be the individual unconscious.

MS. CARRIE ANNA PEARCE

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